PHILOSOPHY

OF

MODERN MIRACLES,

OR

THE RELATIONS OF

SPIRITUAL CAUSES TO PHYSICAL EFFECTS;

WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE

TO THE

Mysterious Developments

AT

BRIDGEPORT AND ELSEWHERE.

BY 'A DWELLER IN THE TEMPLE.'

"There are more things in heaven and earth,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."—SHAKSPEARE.

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ADDRESS TO THE READER.

MANY persons receive new ideas with great caution. This is right. The wrong consists in rejecting ideas merely because they are new; though it must be confessed that this course possesses the merit of convenience when the ability and industry are wanting to attempt a rational investigation. A stupid assent to the prevailing modes of thought, and a blind attachment to established systems, may save a vast amount of labor, while it clearly involves the danger of yielding to ERROR the homage that is only due to the TRUTH. Some men estimate the importance of an idea as others value their wine—*by its age*. The creations of To-day—forms of beauty, instinct with life, and sense, and thought—forms quickened with vital fire—in which TRUTH is a divine incarnation—awaken no emotion but fear; while for the old ERROR—cold, passionless and pulseless in its eternal death—they manifest an unwavering and an unreasoning devotion. But ERROR is not to be venerated for the number of its years; nor is TRUTH less worthy of respect and love, because the passing hour marks the beginning of its revealed existence. With these observations, the author submits the following pages to the judgment of the candid reader. While he has no apology to offer for a free expression of his thoughts, he asks one favor, and concedes one right—a careful examination of his views, and the liberty to accept or reject them.

NEW-YORK, Oct. 16, 1850.

TO

THE FRIENDS

OF

SPIRITUAL SCIENCE IN AMERICA;

WHOSE MISSION

IS TO

HERALD THE DAWN

OF THE

World's Great Sabbath of Liberty and Light:

THESE PAGES ARE

RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY THE

AUTHOR.

PHILOSOPHY OF MODERN MIRACLES.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

That many strange and startling phenomena—displays of a mysterious power and intelligence—have of late occurred, in various parts of the United States, is a fact too well authenticated to admit of rational controversy. At Rochester, Auburn and New-York, Stratford and Bridgeport, Ct.—and other places which need not be mentioned in this connection—a succession of explosive sounds are frequently or constantly occurring, which appear to proceed from some intelligence that is more than mortal. These invisible agents exhibit at times a power to put ponderable objects in motion; they are intimately acquainted with the minutest circumstances of individual experience, and have an unfailing memory of all the Past. They penetrate and disclose the secrets of the human soul; the most opaque substances are transparent before them, and they have a power to unlock the Future and read from the page of Destiny.

The causes of these phenomena are so far removed from the sphere of ordinary human observation, and so profoundly intricate in their nature and modes of manifestation, as to preclude the possibility of analysis or discovery by any attempt conducted through the media of material and sensuous processes. Their occurrence at this time—when superstition is ready to expire amid the increasing light, and History is recording the boldest achievements of Science and Philosophy—can not fail to arrest general attention, while they awaken an interest in which the ele-

ments of a strange novelty and solemn mystery are curiously blended.

The facts to which I refer are sufficiently numerous and authentic, and they have been so extensively published as to render any detailed account in this connection wholly unnecessary; but I am not conscious that any successful attempt has as yet been made to solve the difficult problems which the subject is admitted to involve. With few exceptions, the language of the Press has been, "give us the facts—we want no philosophy." The editors of many of the most intellectual Journals in the country have thus defined their position. Much as I incline to respect the opinions of these gentlemen, on the ordinary themes of newspaper disquisition, I apprehend that, in the present instance, they have mistaken the wants of the time. It may be conceded that facts and phenomena still constitute the forms of evidence which appeal with the greatest power to many minds. This is especially true of those in whom the reasoning faculties are but feebly exercised. An essential service may, therefore, be rendered by recording the facts of daily experience, even when the individual is not qualified to weigh an argument or to perceive the force of a logical deduction. It however requires no very acute discrimination to perceive a fact which addresses itself to the outward sense. The dog has sufficient knowledge to follow his instincts; the wild beasts run to their hiding-places when the tempest approaches; even the ass, who is chiefly distinguished for his stupidity, would inevitably become cognizant of the particular fact, should the roof of the barn fall on his head, though his ears might not be open to a discussion of the general laws of attraction. Seriously, this is restricting the mind to a low and material sphere, when it is qualified to occupy a more elevated and spiritual plane.

A great number of facts have been recorded—numerous witnesses have been examined—and their testimony has been direct and unequivocal. If human nature is not totally depraved, the accumulated testimony, in this case, should be deemed sufficient to establish any fact before any tribunal in the world. But are the people convinced? Is the Press satisfied? I apprehend not.

Something, therefore, beside facts may be wanting to establish the mind on a rational basis. It should be remembered that *facts* are occasionally so extraordinary in their character as to stagger the public faith in human testimony. In such a case, it is only necessary to account for the alledged facts on natural principles, and the human mind is so constituted that it must of necessity believe. Not a mere statement of facts, therefore, but a knowledge of principles, will, after all, govern the decision in many minds.

To believe in the fact, and yet never seek a knowledge of the principle that governs its occurrence, is to lead a life of indolence and to cherish a faith that is not unlike superstition. Some men believe—not merely because particular facts occur and are subject to their observation—but for the reason that they are acquainted with existing natural laws or forces, which are appropriately manifested in such occurrences. With this class of minds, faith is closely allied to science.

I can not resist the conviction that an inclination to regard merely such phenomena as come within the sphere of the senses, while the invisible laws on which these are dependent are unstudied and unknown, has in all ages filled the world with cowardice, fanaticism and skepticism. Wherever this disposition has prevailed, a thousand idle superstitions have found a congenial atmosphere and a soil adapted to their growth. The poor Indian trembled when the sun was eclipsed, because he thought the Great Spirit was angry. In the early history of men, when the philosophy of storms was not understood, the wild rush of the unbalanced elements was regarded as the evidence of Divine displeasure. A knowledge of the philosophy, alone, saved the ignorant from their fears, and gilded the sable wings of the midnight tempest with the light of Divine benignity. In the classic mythology, and in the superstitions of more modern times, certain magicians were presumed to have acquired control over the elements, and all the horrible persecutions for witchcraft and supposed demoniacal intercourse and agency, resulted from a disposition to observe particular *facts*, and to disregard the *philosophy* by which they might have been rationally explained.

In this connection we are called to observe a class of facts which have usually served to inspire superstitious awe and a morbid apprehensiveness. This will continue to be the result of their announcement, when unaccompanied by a rational exposition of their causes. Till this is furnished, intelligent men, who have no opportunity for personal observation, will be inclined to reject the alledged facts, and to doubt the whole subject, comprehending not only the presence and manifestation, but the very existence of the invisible and spiritual. When the knowledge of a great natural law is wholly predicated on a fact or experiment, instead of being accompanied with an intelligent perception of the law itself, faith will last so long as the believer is uniformly successful in his mode of demonstration; but should he fail for once in his experiment, it might totally annihilate his confidence. So long as belief in the very existence of the invisible principle is dependent on the fortuitous exhibition of some sensible phenomenon, it will be perceived that, even a momentary optical illusion will be quite sufficient to subvert the foundations of faith.

The man whose profoundest idea rests on the incidental phases of an unknown law, will very naturally exhibit some singular oscillations. He may believe *to-day*, but his faith may not last him *over night*. The slightest modification, in the aspect of external conditions, will unsettle his mind. Should ninety-nine persons, for example, visit the scene of the 'rappings', and have their silent inquiries answered in the most satisfactory manner, this man would believe, but should the hundredth man not hear the mysterious sounds, or fail of eliciting intelligent answers to his interrogatories, faith might demand leave of absence, and the facts established by the concurrent testimony of the ninety and nine, cease to be facts. The evidence of one man might be regarded as "*a settler*" of the whole controversy of course.

The current logic employed in the discussion of my subject is quite amusing. Take a small specimen. Many persons of the most reliable character affirm that they discover in the 'knockings' unmistakable indications of superior intelligence. One man—Rev. J. M. Austin (possibly several others)—did not per-

ceive any signs of superhuman wisdom; ergo—the 'knockings' did not occur at all—or, if they did, they were produced by a distant waterfall, or by a peculiar snapping of the great toes! Manifestly, philosophy or common sense would be essentially out of order, where such an explanation could be either given or received.

It may be said that the causes of these phenomena are veiled in inscrutable mystery, and that any attempt to discover them argues an unwarrantable presumption. Many, however, may be disposed to reason otherwise, and to ascribe the authorship of this objection to the ignorance that has not the capacity, or the indolence that lacks the disposition, to undertake a rational investigation. It will be conceded that the importance of the inquiry is in no degree diminished by the obscurity in which it is involved. Rather is this an element in the strange and pecular interest that attaches to the subject. In this discussion we want facts and logic and anything like dogmatism would be especially unbecoming and offensive. Yet, while it is cordially admitted that the occult nature of the subject must preclude the possibility of absolute demonstration, the writer will not consent to practice a timid circumspection in the annunciation of his views.

I should accomplish no important purpose, by adding to the number of facts already recorded, if they were to be submitted to the public unaccompanied by any exposition of their probable causes. This course will hardly subserve the best interests of society in any important particular. It seems far more likely to shake the general confidence in the reliability of human testimony, to make cowards of children, to drive men into materialism and nervous old ladies into hysterics! Give us the *rationale* of these marvels, and ignorance, superstition, fanaticism and skepticism will rest together in a common grave.

CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS OF SEVERAL THEORIES—ANIMAL MAGNETISM, CLAIRVOYANCE, VENTRILOQUISM, ELECTRICITY, POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE RELATIONS, ETC.

Before I proceed to give a philosophic exposition of the 'rappings', I propose a brief analysis of the several hypotheses which have come under my observation. These derive their interest not from the grasp of intellect they exhibit, nor yet from any profound insight into Nature or the capacity of her various agents, but they are conspicuous rather as illustrations of the mental imbecility of their authors.

Many persons have ascribed these phenomena to Animal Magnetism, while they have never attempted for a moment to trace their relation to this agent, or so much as furnished a single fact or argument to illustrate the assumption. It is worthy of remark that those who resort to this hypothesis have hitherto, and generally, professed to reject the claims of Animal Magnetism altogether. Now that a greater wonder is presented, the most inveterate skeptic among them is ready to make a tacit concession of the reality of the magnetic phenomena that he may thereby account for the new miracle. But Animal Magnetism will not serve its enemies in this capacity, as will be perceived from the nature of the agent itself.

In the magnetic sleep the external senses are closed, and the physical and mental functions—so far as they depend on voluntary action—are suspended. The individual is deprived of consciousness, and his condition is one of profound repose. In this state of magnetic coma the subject is always deprived of his ordinary powers. The intellect is chained, physical sensibility is partially or wholly destroyed, and he is consequently incapable of accomplishing results which are clearly within the scope of his faculties when aroused and active. If the utmost effort of man

in his normal condition be insufficient to produce the sounds alone, to say nothing of the more startling physical and mental effects, it is illogical and absurd in the last degree to presume that, the same results are rendered easy of accomplishment, when half the human faculties are held in subjection by a slumber that finds its most striking analogy in death.

But this state of induced Somnambulism is often the *means* of introducing the subject into a higher mental condition. When the outward avenues through which the soul is wont to receive its impressions are sealed up, as in a state of complete magnetic coma, the paralysis of temporary death rests on the physical medium of sensation. A leaden slumber weighs down the eyelids, the ear is dull and insensible, and the delicate 'nerve spirit' that ran through and along every nerve of sensation and voluntary motion—keeping the soul in correspondence with the external world—like a weary traveler, now rests by the way. The soul is left in the condition of a prisoner, the windows of whose narrow cell have been closed up, leaving him alone amid the silence that is broken by no voice, and the gloom that is relieved by no ray. How would the poor prisoner look for one ray, or listen for one familiar tone! How struggle to break his chains, and demolish his dungeon walls! He but yields to a divine impulse who yearns for light, and sympathy, and Liberty. Thus the imprisoned soul, when the windows of its dwelling are shut and all things stricken from sight, struggles—as in the pangs of immortal birth—to open its own organs of sense, that it may look with unclouded vision on the great moving scene, or listen with a serene joy to the harmonious music which measures the foot-steps of universal Nature.

The struggle I have described is not always vain, for, in a state of natural or induced Somnambulism, the spiritual senses are sometimes quickened, and visions of immortal splendor pass before the soul. This state is known as Clairvoyance, and to this source the superior intelligence, exhibited by the sounds, is often referred. It is contended that the persons, in whose presence the mystic utterances occur, are in a state of Clairvoyance. If it were so, the fact would only enable us to account for the intelligence dis-

played, while the *sounds*, and the exhibitions of what is denominated *physical power*, would remain to be explained. As Clairvoyance only implies a capacity to see, clearly—or to perceive what is beyond, by reason of its distance or refinement, the reach of the physical organ—it does not help us in the least to unfold the mystery of the sounds, or to solve the problem suggested by the development of force. From the foregoing observations the reader will at once perceive the insufficiency of the supposed agent to account for the various phenomena.

The above might suffice on this point, but before I rest the argument I wish to demonstrate that neither the sounds, nor the intelligence they disclose, can be referred to Clairvoyance. In order to develop this state, or to open the internal medium of sensation, a total abstraction of mind, from all that belongs to the sphere of external being, is indispensable. Hence, as I have intimated, it seldom occurs except when a profound coma or death-like slumber has been previously induced. Now let it be remembered that the ladies of the Fox family, and others in whose presence the responses are given, are not in a magnetic sleep. No pains are taken to place them in electrical *rapport* with each other, or with persons around them. As they are never *magnetized* to produce the sounds, it follows that the sounds can not be referred to *Magnetism*. *They are never in a state of Clairvoyance;* consequently, the numerous class who refer the matter to this source, is left without the slightest foundation. Every man of them is guilty of an insane attempt to stand on nothing, and is doing quite as much to awaken a suspicion of his lunacy, as to establish the theory under review.

Before leaving this point, it is necessary to observe that the state in question is sometimes developed incidentally, or by voluntary effort of the individual himself. In these cases, however, the person is generally rendered susceptible, and the condition induced either by disease, or profound mental abstraction, and is most likely to be experienced by persons who spend much of their time in silence and meditation. If incidental or voluntary Clairvoyance is only compatible with a profound concentration and abstraction of mind, it certainly can not occur with the persons

who have the 'rappings', inasmuch as they are frequently employed in conversation on foreign topics, and are often wholly unconscious of the nature and even the fact of the communications received. The writer visited the Fox family some twenty times, more or less, and had several protracted interviews. The young ladies frequently read the newspapers, talked of the Opera, the Theater, the Museum, JENNY LIND, the latest fashions, etc. Now no one, in the least acquainted with the subject, will for a moment presume that spiritual sight, or Clairvoyance, can accompany this sort of mental exercise. They can never meet and mingle in the same person at the same time. In order to pass from the one to the other, there must be a transition from the sphere of outward sensation to that of internal consciousness, such as sometimes occurs in the experience of the somnambule or the subject of magnetic coma. Here we rest this point, in the absolute conviction that a state of Clairvoyance can never exist while the mind is occupied with outward objects, or distracted by a variety of images. If this is disputed I only demand that a single instance be cited in the whole history of the race.

I pass to consider the notion that the sounds are produced by VENTRILOQUISM. The author of this assumption unnecessarily exposes his ignorance, not only of the nature of the phenomena he assumes to explain, but the ability and subserviency of the agent employed in the elucidation. Ventriloquism is the ingenious imitation of different sounds, in such a manner as to produce an amusing deception concerning the localities from which they are supposed to proceed—the utterances appearing to emanate from immediate or remote situations, as they are either loud or suppressed. This faculty, even in its highest conceivable perfection, can only, and by a bare possibility, account for the sounds. The power that moves ponderable objects, is something more than all this. The intelligence, enshrined within these manifestations, suggests a still more difficult problem. These outward and sensible exhibitions of an inward, invisible and intelligent agent, do not depend on an unintelligent cause. We must seek further for a rational solution; for not a mere undulatory

motion of the atmosphere, or any peculiar exercise of the glottis, will suffice for this purpose. Yet this is all that Ventriloquism is, or can accomplish, and the utmost limits of its power are thus briefly defined.

Another hypothesis presumes the phenomena to depend on ELECTRICITY, but recognizes no ulterior power or agent. Those who incline to this view should never laugh at the ignorance or credulity of mankind. To refer these exhibitions of superior intelligence to electrical agency alone, is to invest an inorganic substance with the lofty attributes of Humanity and Divinity. It is to suppose the existence of the noblest functions of organized being, without the *organization*—on which alone those functions depend. Intelligence, that transcends the utmost limits of all scolastic training—overwhelming the unaided human faculties, and staggering the common faith of mankind—is thus ascribed to an unintelligent and material cause. Reason must be a latent attribute in the mind prepared to accept a theory so intrinsically absurd. To say the phenomena are electrical, and yet, that they are ungoverned and uninfluenced by intelligence, is as preposterous as to suppose the telescope to *see* the stars, the steam to manufacture the goods, and the telegraph-wires to *think*, when all these are but the mere mediums—the passive instrumentalities—whereby the purposes of mind are accomplished.

It should be remembered as essential to an enlightened judgment, that these electro-mental phenomena most frequently accompany those who are young and untaught, either in the resources of electrical and chemical science, the laws of mechanics, or even the first principles of art. To presume that the results are controlled by such persons, without the intervention of electrical apparatus, mechanical instruments, or other devices, which the most searching scrutiny of science and skepticism can discover, is a conjecture opposed, not merely to reason and philosophy, but to the plainest dictates of common sense, and a multitude of FACTS derived from the most authentic sources. To *entertain* this notion, we must divest the mind of those attributes which contribute most to its dignity, and call in question the evidence of our

own senses, not less than the integrity of human nature in its unsophisticated simplicity.

Some New-York Editor assumes the hypothesis that, the sounds occur in the Fox family, because the young ladies in whose presence they are heard sustain Opposite Relations. He maintains that personal contact necessarily occasions an electrical discharge, to which the explosive sounds are properly referable. Most profound and scientific Editor! We wonder the world did not stumble and fall on its ancient path, while yet unblest with the light of thy genius! As negative bodies, when good electrical conductors, are always most exposed in a storm, we advise the friends of this man to protect his *head* with a lightning rod! It occurs to the writer that, when electricity passes from animal bodies to other outward forms, the discharge occurs *conductively*, or in a manner imperceptible by the senses. Besides, if the laws of vital electricity would admit of a *disruptive* discharge—which is not the fact—this could only occur when positive and negative bodies are *first* brought into communication. If it were even possible for such an effect to be produced, only a single explosion would occur, when, an equilibrium being established, all sensible phenomena would instantly cease.

The intelligent reader will at once perceive that, if the sounds occur on the principle involved in the last mentioned hypothesis, they would be most frequent and powerful among *strangers*. At great religious convocations and mass meetings, in ball rooms, in the market-place and the public highway—among persons who are seldom together—the necessary positive and negative relations would be most likely to exist, and hence there would occur, in such places, an uninterrupted succession of explosive sounds like a discharge of small arms. Young men and maidens would produce *electrical sparks;* saints and sinners would generate thunder; fools and philosophers would be struck by lightning every day, while crowded cities would be blown sky high!

The several hypotheses thus past in review, are among the miserable shifts to which ignorance and skepticism are being driven in this age of brilliant discovery and miraculous power. When Infidelity is willing to go naked through the world, we

may at least admire its freedom and honesty. We are denied even this poor satisfaction, when it clothes its deformed carcass in the faded and rent drapery of ancient superstitions, and deified systems and customs. The writer hereof sympathizes but feebly with the species of piety that venerates the Prophet's old coat, while it has no sort of reverence for the immortal spirit that gave to his touch the power of healing, and to his inspired soul a supra-mortal perception.

CHAPTER III.

ANALYSIS AND DISCOVERY OF THE PRINCIPLES INVOLVED IN THE LATE MYSTERIOUS DEVELOPMENTS AT ROCHESTER, AUBURN, NEW-YORK, BRIDGEPORT, STRATFORD, ETC.

I NOW solicit the attention of the reader to a more SPIRITUAL and rational explanation of the mysterious phenomena referred to in the preceding chapters. I apprehend that only a moment's reflection will be required to satisfy the philosophic mind that the agents which most powerfully affect the body are all invisible. The atmospheric and electrical changes that frequently occur; the noxious vapors exhaled from the earth; the effluvia generated in diseased bodies, and evolved from the decomposition of animal and vegetable substances; and all the unseen agents of infection, are so many illustrations of the truth of my remark: And if the most remarkable functional and organic effects are thus produced, and the specific conditions and tendencies of the body are determined by agents which are imperceptible by the senses, who will venture the foolish assumption that the MIND may not be powerfully and almost constantly acted on, and its functions stimulated, in a greater or less degree, by the spheres of invisible life and thought? That man in his mental, more especially than in his physical nature and relations, is thus influenced, the writer is made deeply conscious from an investigation of the laws of mind, as well as from personal experience. As the mind cannot always

perceive the spiritual presence, or recognize its agency in the existing mental state; so the body is alike insensible to the presence of those agents which act on and change its physiological condition.

The foregoing considerations are believed to justify the inference that the human mind may be controlled by influences emanating from invisible spiritual sources. Surely if the body, organized of the gross elements of material existence, is most directly and powerfully influenced by intangible mediums, it is not too much to presume that the *mind* may derive many of its impressions from the spiritual world. If the writer had time to enter on so elaborate a discussion of the subject, this conclusion might be sustained by a vast array of facts and arguments—drawn from the Scriptures, from History, and personal experience—all tending to illustrate the capacity and susceptibility of the mind to impressions from this source. But the limits assigned to this dissertation do not permit us to particularize to any great extent, nor is this indispensable in the present elucidation of the subject.

That the visible and invisible worlds are so intimately united as to admit of an intercommunication between their respective inhabitants, is an idea that for centuries was entertained alike by Pagans, Jews and Christians. It is believed that for a long time the world had frequent and remarkable illustrations of this intercourse, in the wonderful Revelations given to man. It was only when corruption and a stony-hearted Materialism choked the harmonic utterances of the Spirit—when sectarian blindness and intolerance veiled the world in shadows, and closed up the avenues of its spiritual light—that the idea was deemed unsound or heretical.

But if man—the creature of this dim orb—once held converse with the spirits of light, what evidence have we that this intercourse is at an end? There is nothing in the Christian Scriptures, nor do I discover aught in the nature of the case to authorize such a conclusion. Man still requires instruction; the powers of the invisible world are not exhausted; and no earthly intelligence has been able to fathom the infinitude of that wisdom and glory,

which 'eye hath not seen, nor the heart of man conceived.' If man in the olden time—while under the influence of inferior circumstances—when civilization had not yet aroused the slumbering faculties of the soul, was impressed by invisible spiritual agents, he must now be qualified to receive similar impressions from the same source. God and Heaven are unchanged, and the human mind is subject to the same general laws. If Angels walked with the ancient Seers, and communed with them by the sea and on the mountain, they may now visit the abodes of the living. If the souls of inspired Bards were fired from Heaven—and the lips of Prophets made eloquent by being touched with a live coal from invisible altars—man may still be inspired, and the Spirit's burning thought claim an utterance from mortal tongues!

Man is not always addressed in the same manner. The soul may be directly informed, or through its outward organic medium. There may be no thunder-tones falling on the external organ, but the "still small voice" of the Spirit may have its deep utterance in the silent chambers of the soul. God and angelic teachers do not always speak to the understanding through the ear. A distinct impression may be made on the spirit through its own medium of sensation. In this manner, doubtless, the treasures of immortal thought are exposed to human contemplation, and thus the intelligencies of a higher world still speak to man. If, then, we are benighted and cut off from angelic intercourse, it is not because Heaven has no longer an interest in the affairs of men, nor yet, because the superior wisdom of the present time renders such instruction unnecessary; but rather for the reason that man is so blinded by his own selfish schemes and material ideas that, he will not be taught from Heaven. Yet

> "Heaven encircles all. The blest Immortals
> Near us, divine with love's pure beauty, stand;
> Alluring us, through Faith's translucent portals,
> Into the Better Land."

Unseen by mortal eyes, they yet walk among the dwellers of earth; they speak, though our ears are dull and insensible; they commune with us in day-dreams and midnight visions, but few comprehend their mystic tongue.

The results arrived at in the preceding chapter infallibly indicate that the persons, in whose presence the oracular responses are given, have no active or conscious agency in their production. Men of the most acute discrimination have long been engaged in the investigation. Intelligence and skepticism, sharpened by the suspicion of fraud, have not failed to institute every ordeal afforded by the resources of science and art, till sensible and candid men, every where, have been forced to abandon all idea of tracing the mysterious phenomena to any human device. Thus the names of innocent persons, who were threatened with the loss of reputation and the dearest earthly interests, have been vindicated; their characters are seen to be untarnished by alledged acts of fraud and hypocrisy, while foul suspicion is left at last to sting the heart that did gender it. As the phenomena exhibit intelligence—often of a high order—they can be referred to none but an intelligent source. Any hypothesis that ascribes them to any of the forms or conditions of material existence, presumes that an effect may be superior to its cause, which is impossible. The persons attended by this mysterious presence are unconscious of any part in its strange revealments, and are only passive witnesses to a class of facts and phenomena which they can neither control nor explain. That they have no direct agency in their occurrence is evident from several considerations, which may be comprehended in a brief recapitulation: 1. No such agency can be discovered. 2. The intelligence displayed is above the sphere of human thought and comprehension. 3. The exhibitions of power—occurring as they do without any organic or other visible medium—transcend the efforts of mortals.

Perhaps the reader may now be prepared to accept what appears to be a natural conclusion, viz: THESE PHENOMENA EMANATE FROM INVISIBLE SPIRITUAL BEINGS, WHO ACT THROUGH SOME IMPONDERABLE EARTHLY MEDIUM. The considerations which lead to this conclusion, so far as they may be comprehended within the limits of the present disquisition, are mainly before the reader, and it will now be the chief object to illustrate the probable *modus operandi* by which the various phenomena *are* produced. I begin by premising that all power has its origin in

MIND; and as no one but an Atheist will be inclined to dispute the position, I shall not stop to fortify it by any show of argument. In the production of physical effects mind acts, either through organic instruments or, by a direct power over imponderable agents. The human mind usually manifests its powers through the bodily organs, and persons whose limited sphere of thought and action seldom calls them to contemplate the power of mind except in wielding the implements of toil, or, in other words, its more sensible displays, are liable to conclude that it is thus restricted in its modes of manifestation. But they lose sight of all those grander exhibitions of power and wisdom in which we recognize the presence of Deity. All gross material forms are pervaded by certain imponderable agents over which the mind has a direct control, and hence the Divine Mind requires no organic mediums to move the Universe.

The writer has demonstrated by a variety of facts and experiments, not detailed in this connection, that what is usually denominated the nervous fluid of animal bodies, is *electricity*, and that the same is evolved from all parts of the system where there is either chemical or mechanical action. It should be observed *in transitu* that, this vital electrical medium is the agent on which sensation depends, and the proximate cause of all muscular power and motion. I shall now appeal to facts to prove that the human mind has this direct power, not only over the vital electricity of the body in which it is enshrined, but over the same agent in other bodies.

The facts illustrative of this point are numerous and conclusive, but in this citation only a few need be given. We may learn how great a power the mind has over the electro-nervous circulation, by the effect of any sudden mental agitation. Intense love, violent hate, fear, jealousy, or any powerful impulse, will instantly interrupt the equilibrium of the circulation. The mental disturbance produces a corresponding physical derangement. If the individual is influenced more by thought than feeling, the unbalanced tide of the circulation will be likely to flow to the brain, producing a strange cerebral excitement and a flushed countenance. If the person be characterized by blind and unreasoning

passion, the torrent may rush to the heart, leaving the visage pale and causing an accelerated arterial action. Not only a momentary functional derangement is thus produced, but congestion, paralysis, insanity, and death, often occur from this direct power of mind over the imponderable elements of the system.

But the agency of mind, in causing electrical disturbances, is not restricted to the body, but extends to other organic forms, and to unorganized matter. To sustain this position let facts be submitted.

It is well known that those who are highly susceptible to electro-nervous disturbances, may be influenced, and often controlled by the will of another person, even when there is no direct physical contact. These effects are sometimes produced when the parties are at a distance from each other. When you chance to occupy the same apartment with persons thus susceptible, a vigorous effort of mind will enable you to command their attention without seeming to regard them. Enter a room where a person of this description is in a profound slumber—fix your eyes steadily on the face of the sleeper—exert the will powerfully, and you will produce such an electrical disturbance as will cause him to awake. We are often suddenly reminded of some absent friend, whose image all at once rises before us, when, the next moment, the impression is rendered an actuality by the absolute presence. It not unfrequently occurs that persons are singularly anticipated in what they are about to say—some other person giving utterance to the same thought in the same words. Lovers and all persons of intuitive and receptive natures, especially when united by a strong attachment, readily divine each other's thoughts, and read, in a silent language, the most secret impulses of the heart.

These effects are all produced by electrical disturbances, communicated from mind to mind, and when the parties are separated, the impression is transmitted through the intervening electrical medium of the earth and atmosphere. This power is perceptible in the ability of some men to tame wild beasts, and to subdue their enemies. It is strikingly displayed in the electrical excitement that occasionally runs through and pervades a vast multitude, when some inspired genius thus moves, as by a single

impulse, the hearts of thousands. We have felt its thrilling power,

> "In the song of the poet, when love's bright spells
> O'er the strings of his wild harp sweep";

in the responsive utterance of kindred spirits, and the deep mystical cadence of friendly voices. It is felt when we press the warm hand, and heart answers to heart in the rapid measure of intense delight. We are sensible of the mysterious power, when the electric fires of congenial souls kindle and burn on the parted lips of Genius and Love; and ever—do we yield to the intangible presence—as impulses wild, joyous, or terrible, come leaping up from the invisible depths of Being.

It can be demonstrated that all sensation is made to depend on electrical disturbances of the nervous system; also, that the greatest electro-nervous excitements are produced by *mental* action. As has been intimated, one person may act on, and move, the sensational medium of the nervous system of another. In this manner the writer has demonstrated, by a vast number of successful experiments, the capacity of mind to transmit thought to other minds, by a mental electric process. Thus a succession of images may be rendered distinctly visible, while they only exist in the ideal of the governing mind. These, and a variety of sensational impressions, not admitting of specific reference in this place, are produced on the same principle that governs ordinary sensation, viz: a disturbance of the electrical medium that pervades the sensor nerves. As mind does not absolutely require the outward organic structure, in the exercise of this power, it will be perceived that, if divested of the present external medium of sensation and action, it would still be competent to produce these effects. It would only be necessary for the invisible intelligence to place itself in rapport with the mind, and the act of volition would readily cause an electrical excitement at the sensorium. These cerebral disturbances produce all the diversified phenomena of sensation, and their interpretation by the soul constitutes thought.

When the sounds are not produced in this way—and it is proper to say that for the most part they are not—they evidently depend on a disturbance of the imponderables that pervade the

objects and localities where they occur. As these are subject to the direct action of mind, the superior power of the spirit, when released from its earthly shackles, may be adequate to their production. To develop the phenomena, as they ordinarily occur, it is only required to alternately interrupt and restore the electrical equilibrium, and a rapid succession of shocks and sounds would follow. In this case the cerebral disturbance, through the medium of the auditory nerve, is occasioned by the atmospheric undulations, caused by the concussion, instead of by the direct action of mind. The principle of sensation is the same in both cases, and it will be perceived that the electro-nervous excitement on which it depends, occurs alike from material and spiritual causes. When the sounds are confined to the floor, the table, or other articles of furniture, they appear to be caused by electrical explosions, occurring in the fibers of the wood, and this view of the subject is confirmed by the sensible presence of electricity in all these phenomena. It is impossible for these sounds to occur without a sudden disturbance of the medium, and as this can not by any possibility result from an instantaneous evolvement of more electricity in one part of the same body than in another—when the whole is composed of the same elements—we are forced to conclude that the disturbance is produced by volition. What rational man will not concede that this inference is inevitable, since the sounds disclose the workings of mind? And as the intelligence thus revealed is above the plane of mortal perception and comprehension, from what source can it emanate, but the spheres of Immortal Life and Thought?

To move heavy bodies, it is only necessary to disturb the imponderables which pervade their surfaces or permeate their composition. This is proved by the experiments of electro-magnetism, and by all the changes in the forms of matter, from the simplest chemical process up to the most stupendous revolution in Nature. If further evidence be wanting to demonstrate the power of the *human* mind to produce electrical disturbances—beyond the limits of its own organic medium, and without the sphere of organized existence—we have it in the result of a beautiful and conclusive experiment, recently performed in Paris and Berlin,

and reported to the French Academy of Science, on the 21st of May, 1849. By this experiment deviations of the needle of a sensitive galvanometer are produced by volition. The oscillations of the needle vary from *thirty to fifty degrees*, according to the power of the experimenter. Thus the Universe is moved, from the deep center to the vast circumference, by the action of the Infinite Mind on the more refined elements of Being.

It is sufficiently manifest that all gross substances are pervaded by refined and invisible mediums; also, that heavy bodies exhibit motion whenever the imponderables surrounding their surface, or pervading their substance, are disturbed. As mind must be acknowledged to possess a direct power over these intangible agents, it follows that mind can put ponderable objects in motion, without calling to its aid any organic instrumentalities. This general conclusion finds adequate confirmation in the facts and phenomena of Nature. We need not seek for visible material causes, since the most powerful agents in Nature are all invisible, or spiritual. There is a power that puts the winds and waves in motion—throws up islands in the midst of the sea—rouses the slumbering volcano, and moves in the awful tread of the earthquake, to topple down cities and rend continents in twain! This power is invisible and *electrical*. Moreover, in the last analysis it is *spiritual;* for the man who sees not the Supreme Intelligence that is over all, is 'the fool, who hath said in his heart there is no GOD'!

It is a principle entertained in all our school philosophies, that, *gross matter has no power to put itself in motion*. The motive power *must, therefore, be integral in mind*, and thus all forms of material existence exhibit motion, in proportion as their more refined elements are acted on by mental or spiritual forces.

The foregoing must suffice for this department of our subject. We have been called to consider a class of facts and phenomena, somewhat diversified in their nature, yet discovering on all occasions intelligence and power, beyond the reach of ordinary human comprehension and effort. To assume that these can be wholly traced to physical causes, is at once to deny the supremacy of mind over matter; to reject God; and to enthrone the old Mate-

rialism, that refers the Universe and all its operations to accident, chance, the laws of material nature, or some other unintelligent cause. It is highly proper for those who thus object to the essential features of our theory, to perceive and comprehend the nature of the position they assume. It is immaterial whether they are in or out of the Church. Infidelity is one and identical, whether lurking beneath the drapery at the altar, or standing outside the court. Materialism is ever the same—cold—dead, and statue-like—and its baptism in the name of Jesus, can no more change its nature, than the rising waters of the Nile can soften the stony heart of the Sphinx!

CHAPTER IV

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

"What shall make the truth
Visible? Through the smoky glass of sense
The blessed sun may never know himself."—FESTUS

I NOW propose to consider the objections most likely to arise in the mind of the reader, who may not have been previously prepared for the reception of our theory. These objections will be various, as the habits of thought and the degrees of development which characterized the individuals. The tendency of certain minds to invest them with an unreal importance renders it necessary to notice them specifically, lest they be deemed unanswerable, or otherwise affect, in the judgment of the reader, the validity of our reasoning.

It may be said, by way of objection to the views already expressed, that revelations from the spiritual world are made through a *spiritual medium*—or, in a manner not perceptible by the external senses. This observation, in its general application, is conceded to be true, but numerous exceptions have occurred in every period of which History has spoken. We read that immor-

tal visiters came to converse with the ancient Prophets and Patriarchs; the inspired Poets and gifted Seers of all ages and countries have been divinely illuminated. Many of these possessed the power to discern spirits; or,

"—— through the forms of things
Could see their essenses——".

Either the internal senses of these men were opened by the power of invisible beings—acting on them agreeably to psychological laws—or half transparent bodies, like luminous clouds were, by the same spiritual agency, projected out of the refined elements of the atmosphere. But we are not now especially interested in the *mode* of these appearances; it is sufficient for our present purpose to establish the *fact* of their occurrence. In the canonical writings of the Hebrews, are numerous accounts of angels appearing to men, and among all nations, not excepting the most enlightened and modern, are legends concerning the sensible presence of those who have

"—— shuffled off this mortal coil."

These all indicate that the shades of the departed—though separated from the grosser elements that constitute our corporality —do nevertheless assume visible forms, and thus reveal themselves to the inhabitants of the earth.

Not the eye alone, but the ear, is sometimes addressed by the spiritual presence. In the Jewish and Christian Scriptures are numerous communications, alledged to have been made in this manner. The accounts given of the baptism of Jesus and the conversion of Saul, afford conspicuous examples. Numerous well authenticated instances of a similar character occur in the writings of other authors; for examples, the reader is referred to Jung Stilling, the "Seeress of Provorst," Southey's Life of Wesley, and the "Night Side of Nature," by Mrs. Crowe. Not unlike these are the revelations of Genius, as would appear from the following account which Mozart gives of his inspired moments: "When all goes well with me—when I am in a carriage, or walking, or when I can not sleep at night, the thoughts come streaming in upon me most fluently: whence, or how, is more than I can tell. Then follow the counterpoint and the clang of the different

instruments; and, if I am not disturbed, my soul is fixed, and the thing grows greater, and broader, and clearer; and I have it all in my head, even when the piece is a long one; and *I see it* like a beautiful picture—not hearing the different parts in succession as they must be played, but the whole at once. That is the delight! The composing and the making is like a beautiful and vivid dream; but this *hearing* of it is the best of all." It will be perceived that spirits have power to infuse their thoughts into the minds of men; either directly, or through the medium of the senses. Men of exalted genius are always inspired. The reason why they are gifted with great and original thoughts is that they sustain a more intimate relation to the spiritual world—the source of all inspiration—than other men.

It may be said that the mysterious 'rappings' can not emanate from spirits, because this mode of manifestation is not sufficiently *dignified*. We are told that spirits must have some more elevated employment than "*knocking* on the floor or the table to satisfy the idle and the curious." Strange as it may appear, this objection is often made by persons who entertain the notion that, the spirit-world is chiefly peopled by those who were distinguished for no very exalted pursuits while living on the earth, and they profess to believe that death effects no change in the character and inclinations of men. If their theological views on this point are substantially true, the objection, as predicated on the undignified nature of the employment, may be dismissed. This single consideration is sufficient to destroy its force. If there are low and abandoned spirits in the other world, their pursuits would be likely to correspond to their characters. If the invisible state be mainly inhabited by the ignorant and devilish—and their condition be unalterably fixed—evidently, the want of dignity alledged to characterize the *manner* of the communications, presents no valid objection to their spiritual origin.

But *is* there anything intrinsically low or undignified in the peculiar mode? Manifestly, nothing that can be perceived by a rational mind. Whether electrical explosions are made in the floor, the table, or the *clouds*, is much the same. To "the Dweller in the Temple" there is no essential difference, except

that the latter are on a grander scale. No matter how many might claim to have received revelations; if the senses of ordinary men were not addressed, all such claims would be regarded as evidence of lunacy or knavery. The Saints in Heaven might whisper to a thousand souls, but unless the utterance was heard by the Parish Priest, or recorded by the Town Clerk, the people would not believe. But when the spirits thus speak to infidel ears, and the mystic sounds may be heard of all men, Materialism is suddenly shaken in her dusty temples, and her idols are thrown down. *Knocking*—if the reader will have it that the spirits knock—may not, therefore, be an improper or ineffectual mode of communication. If we are correctly informed, Saul was never converted to a spiritual religion until he was first '*knock'd down*'! It was necessary to break the shell of his materialism before he could see the light. Hence—for aught we can discover to the contrary—there may be a singular propriety in the mode of communication adopted. Is it not what men demand? O ye who deny your immortality; who have called from the dark depths of your hollow hearts for ocular demonstration! why do ye sneer when the evidence is presented which ye have sought so long! Ye who have taught us of the spiritual world, were ye meaningless! or, will ye lend an ear, now that spirits respond to your preaching? I will implore the oracle in your behalf. Be silent! and for once your barren minds may be enriched with a fresh thought. At present ye are not qualified to speak; for whether the mysterious visiter be some

"Spirit of health, or goblin damn'd",

ye know not, and can not judge, except ye pause and listen.

It may still be objected that the idea advanced by the writer, concerning the direct power of spirits over the elements of the earth and atmosphere, is opposed to the facts of human experience and from the nature of the case improbable. The mistake of the objector consists in his assuming to settle the question for the whole world by applying the standard of his individual experience. As well may one think of measuring the waters of the Atlantic Ocean with a pint cup! Very little of what is now known to be true was ever confirmed by universal experience.

On the contrary, it requires the experience and observation of all men, of all ages, to constitute the sum of the world's knowledge. But the views we have expressed *are* confirmed by the experience of men whom the reader as well as the writer is bound to respect. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians speaks of the "Prince of the power of the air." When the spirits of the tempest came up from the caves of Galilee, and the wail of the winds, as they swept over Tiberias, mingled with the cries of faithless disciples, 'Jesus rebuked the winds and there was a great calm.' In the II Book of Samuel, it is stated that the Philistines when drawn up in battle array against Israel, at Mizpeh, were smitten and dispersed, by a thunder-storm which was produced by immediate spiritual direction. When Jesus "cried with a loud voice" at his crucifixion, it is recorded that "the veil of the temple was rent in twain." There was, moreover, a power that shook the dungeon-walls of Philippi, in Macedonia; the doors were opened, and the incarcerated Apostles of Jesus were released from their chains. But there was no strong arm there, to move those ponderous bolts and bars—*it was a spiritual manifestation!* That spirits have power to act on and influence the elements, is an idea that seems to have been entertained not only by Heathen authors, but by the Jewish and Christian teachers. It may be said that these are miracles—be it so; miracles may be wrought now. It is safe to affirm that what has been, *may be.* If it be assumed that miracles are ended, I reply, this is making a new issue and begging the question; besides, in this case, the objector takes an affirmative position and the burden of proof devolves on him.

It is said that these things are contrary to Nature, and yet what does the objector know of the resources of Nature? There are a thousand phenomena, not less mysterious and wonderful in themselves, which we regard as eminently natural, not that we can always explain them, but because they frequently occur. Suppose the objector had never known the atmosphere to be disturbed—that during the whole course of his experience it had preserved a profound and uninterrupted repose. Show him the prostrate trunks of the old forest, over which the tornado has past. Tell him that these were all laid low—almost in a moment—by

the invisible power of the viewless winds, and he would laugh at your folly. Or, let it be supposed that he had never witnessed the phenomenon of lightning. Point him to the smitten oak, that stands there—alone, on the mountain—like a dying monarch wrapped in his fading purple. Tell him, if you please, that an invisible shaft from Heaven wrought the work of death; that the fiery bolt descended, arrow-like, from the great deep of the silent air! And think you he would believe? Nay! knowing that forest-trees are felled with the *woodman's axe*, and having witnessed only the ordinary mode of *splitting logs*, he would reject your testimony with indignant scorn! Thus a storm may be seen to be a terrible infringement of Nature, in the mind of him who had only been called to contemplate Nature in the calm hours of her repose. It may be contrary to Nature for water to become congealed in Siam, or for men to perspire freely at the Poles; yet it is quite natural for water to *freeze* while hot-drops and a steam bath would probably *sweat* a Laplander. Consider, O man, that the sphere of possibilities is not circumscribed by the line of individual experience, for God is infinite, and the resources of Nature are inexhaustable.

It is further objected that, these phenomena can not emanate from spirits because the communications are in some instances unreliable. Here, again, we are left to dispute either the theological views of almost all Christendom, or the validity of the objection. If all conceivable shades of character exist among the inhabitants of the other world, there may occur a similar diversity in the revelations from that source. If the premises were admitted it would be unnecessary to disclose the great Spiritual Arcana to enable us to arrive at a just conclusion. Indeed, it is quite manifest that, the occasional untruthfulness of these communications can not materially effect the question of their origin. On the contrary, from the popular views of human character and destiny, our philosophy might seem to derive additional confirmation.

But we are not forced to conclude that the inhabitants of the unseen world imbody the elements of all diabolism, in order to account for these errors in a rational manner. As the human

soul like the body, and like all forms of organized existence, is progressively developed, there must be, in the next sphere as well as in this, every degree of growth from the mere germ of immortal life up to the highest Archangel. We can not for a moment entertain the idea that all spirits, on their separation from the earthly elements, are enlightened and happy in a similar degree. The supposition involves a violation of all the analogies in Nature. Very many who have lived out the ordinary period of physical existence, undergo the transformation and enter the state beyond, while yet in their spiritual infancy. Not having their interior faculties quickened while on the earth, they slumber till the immortal nature awakes amid the lights and shadows of Eternity. Their limited development must continue to interpose a veil between them and the superior principles of a higher plain. Above, the elements of knowledge expand to infinity; and with the truths of this immeasurable domain, the soul can only be brought into progressive association as it traverses the great spiral of ascending Life. If the spiritual embryo has any perception of what is beyond, it may be as we discern the first shadowy images of the immortal world—"through a glass darkly." The reliability of these spiritual communications must, therefore, essentially depend on the wisdom of those who make them. The most exalted intellect of earth is not above mistake; and even the superior intelligences of a higher world *may err*, for infallibility is the attribute of God—alone.

But the errors may be accounted for in another way. I allude to the difficulty of making mere material agents subservient to the higher purposes of mind. The most profoundly scientific man may fail in his modes of demonstration, not for want of sufficient knowledge, but because of the imperfection of the media through which he is compelled to act. Of what avail, for example, is the science of the most profound electrician if the acceptance of his principles must be left to depend on his ability to produce a given experiment at any moment? A result obtained a thousand times before, may be rendered impossible on account of some peculiarity in the electrical or atmospheric medium. As electricity is the intermediate agent employed by the spirits, in the production of

the various phenomena, it follows necessarily that, the state of the atmosphere and the electrical condition of the persons in attendance, render the demonstrations more or less easy of accomplishment. It must be manifest that while mind, in its outward revealments, is restricted to the use of physical means and instruments, its manifestations will of necessity be perfect, only in a degree corresponding to the general perfection of these mediums. The harp of Orpheus, if unstrung, would yield only discordant sounds, though it were swept by the Bard himself.

If it be objected to the spiritual origin of the sounds that, they have not occurred at an earlier period in the experience of mankind, I may reply that, the objection is no less valid against a material hypothesis, and, in fact, bears equally on any natural phenomenon that may occur. We may as well object to the reality of every new discovery in physical science, merely because it was not made before. It is well known that the present mode of communication, with the mysterious visitants, was an accidental discovery. Though the sounds had occurred before in the hearing of numerous persons, no one presumed that they were produced by MIND until a little child ventured to question the strange presence, when, it instantly responded in an intelligent manner. It is true that, in all ages spiritual causes have been revealed in the production of physical effects, and the want of a regular and reliable medium of communication, between the visible and invisible worlds, may have been owing rather to human ignorance, cowardice and unbelief, than to any other cause. Most persons shrink with more than childish apprehension from the very idea of the intangible presence, and if spirits are influenced at all by the considerations that govern men, they may not be inclined to converse with those who carefully avoid their society.

It has been objected that these manifestations are productive of no important result. "What good," says the man whose record of all he values is entered on the *ledger*. This objection ordinarily emanates from those who have been accustomed to determine the specific importance of everything, by its capacity to minister to their pride and avarice. When they examine a

new discovery, it is with a view to ascertain its relations to their physical necessities, and its subserviency to the purposes of a selfish ambition. Whatever fails to answer their ends in these particulars, is treated with indifference. All else that is valuable has been attended to by others. Plato solved the problem of the soul's immortality, and Christ demonstrated the resurrection—the work is done! Truth, virtue, and all similar abstractions, are carefully looked after by the Priesthood, and nothing remains for these men but to calculate their gains. The only 'knockings' in which they are especially interested occur at the *counter*, and the all-important communication for them is a *draft*, payable at sight. Several characters here present themselves, affording to the amateur an occasion for an interesting study.

Yonder is a man whose keen eye and angular features indicate that he may be a financier. His brow is knit together, as though all the mental forces had found a focal point in the organ of individuality. He proves to be a devout worshiper, who carries his god in his *pocket*. This man's 'eye is evidently single', for he looks out for ONE. He has 'come out from the world', in a manner peculiar to himself and his class; i. e., he cares for nobody else—only he and his *god*. It is his custom to go 'on 'Change', and he now requests the spirits to 'knock' the price of stocks for *next week*, so that he can buy or sell and realize a handsome speculation.

The door opens, and a well-dressed person of careless manner enters. In his whole demeanor we discern the peculiar *abandon* that characterizes a fashionable young man of dissolute habits. This youth expects to *heir* the estate of a rich uncle, and desires to know how long before the old man will be *immortalized!* also, whether spirits can exercise any control over the organs of *respiration*.

A SPECULATOR—one associated with a newspaper establishment—is next in order. His object is to obtain the news by the next steamer, in advance of the arrival, in order to secure the reputation of an enterprising publisher—nothing more! Surely, the oracle can afford to deliver himself in a most reliable manner to one whose object is so legitimate and proper.

A vain, indolent young man wishes the spirits to refer him to a situation, exactly adapted to his wants—one that requires no talent, no labor, and pays *liberally*.

We must sketch the characters as they come—and the next is "Miss Spindle," who only wants to learn a certain *secret* in the possession of her neighbor, and to ascertain the probabilities of matrimony, in her case, now that she is past *forty*.

A large number of politicians are anxious to find out how the ensuing election will go—whether Whig or Democrat—so that they can arrive at a just conclusion as to what they *believe* with reference to the pending questions.

If the spirits will only 'rap' for all these, according to their several desires, they will all believe. They have only to provide for the lazy, tell fortunes, prophecy for political demagogues, and 'knock' the present prices of cotton and other staples in the foreign markets, and Spiritualism will prosper gloriously! All Wall-street will be brought to a 'knowledge of the truth;' the *fact* of the 'knockings' will be duly authenticated, and the inconceivable importance of the subject will plainly appear. O, most conscientious seekers after spiritual light and instruction, how do ye long for the communion of the saints! But, seriously, is there no other good but gold? When scarcely a lofty thought or generous emotion may spontaneously arise, to remind you that man is immortal, is it of no consequence that an invisible power is revealed to your dull senses? Is it in vain that spirits *knock* at the door of your closed hearts? Can no power break through the concretion of sensuality that covers your souls? And is nothing required to divert your attention from the world—ye whose god is Mammon and whose treasures are laid up in *iron safes!*

Having occupied the alloted space, this disquisition may now be brought to a close. The reader has doubtless observed that the author, in the development of the spiritual view of the mysterious phenomena, has not hesitated to speak freely, yet with a gravity becoming the nature of the theme. In the review of the various theories and objections greater liberty was, of course, required, and the writer has ventured, in his imperfect way,

to answer the demands of the subject. It may be said, "Every man has his notion, and defends it with as much earnestness as if the salvation of the world depended on its acceptance." No one can have a more profound consciousness of this fact than the present writer, and few have greater reason to complain of this unreasoning devotion to the preconceived opinions of men. It is for this cause that each succeeding discovery is regarded with suspicion, by many minds, while every dogmatist denounces the expression of a new thought, as an infringement of his rights. Ignorance will always repudiate your new ideas and improved philosophy, little as the old systems are doing to refine the nature, and exalt the condition of man. But the dead weight of ignorance, conservatism and professional immobility, can not arrest the world's progress. The human mind is unfolding powers which belong to a higher plain, and TRUTH is making the mightiest conquests. New lights glimmer in the Spiritual Heavens, and the great Orbs, whose effulgence

"—— made the old time glorious,"

are revealed to our longing eyes in all their majesty, as the mists of ignorance and unbelief pass away, to obscure the world no more.

INTERESTING DEVELOPMENTS

AT BRIDGEPORT.

Conferences with the Spirits.

The spirits have of late been disposed to communicate with great freedom, at Bridgeport, Ct. through no less than three several mediums. The person in whose presence the responses were first given, is Mr. Henry Gordon—a young man of amiable disposition and correct habits. The names of the other parties can not now be disclosed. The attention of Mr. Gordon was first attracted—some months since—to a peculiar sound, as of the dropping of water from the ceiling to the floor. When in his own room he often heard the sounds, and as often searched the apartment in order to discover their cause—but all to no purpose. The sounds gradually became louder and more frequent, and the possibility of having some invisible room-mate now occurred to him. Having read accounts of several interviews with the 'Rochester Spirits,' he resolved to adopt a new mode of investigation, and commenced to interrogate the author of the sounds, when, to his astonishment, intelligent answers were promptly received. From that hour the spirits have kept the company of Mr. Gordon, and they not only answer him with singular readiness, but other persons who question them in his presence.

Many worthy citizens of Bridgeport are deeply interested in the subject, and gentlemen of acknowledged intelligence from New-York and New-England, and even from remote parts of the country, have visited the scene of these manifestations. From twenty to fifty persons have usually been in attendance, at the daily sessions of the spirits. The writer has been favored with every opportunity for investigation that could be either granted or desired—has conversed for days together with these invisible

agents—and the conclusions to which he has arrived are before the reader. To enable others to judge of the nature and interest of these conversations, the details of a single interview are given in this connection. The writer being of opinion that a number of questions relating to, and covering the nature and mode of the spiritual manifestations—now attracting public attention—might be asked with propriety and answered with profit, a special meeting was summoned for this purpose, when—after a brief interval of silence—the colloquy proceeded in manner and form as follows:

QUESTION.—Do the spirits perceive and approve of our object?

ANSWER.—They do.

Q.—Will the spirits answer the questions that may now be submitted?

A.—Yes.

Q.—Who will communicate the replies?

A.—W. E. CHANNING.

Q.—It is believed that if the answers are recorded *verbatim et literatim*, as the Spirit may dictate, they may be more satisfactory. If we are right, will the Spirit use the Alphabetical mode in any communications it may be pleased to make?

A.—It will in part.

Q.—Are the sounds ever produced by the volition of disimbodied minds, or by the control of invisible spiritual beings over the electrical or sensational medium of the nervous system?

A.—They may be so produced; and, to a certain extent, they are.

Q.—Do they more frequently depend on the capacity of the spirits, by an effort of the will, to disturb the imponderable agents which pervade the objects and localities from which the sounds appear to proceed?

A.—Yes; this is the usual mode.

[It would seem that the electric medium is disturbed, or thrown out of balance, by the volition of the communicating spirit, and

that, in seeking its equilibrium, it passes in a *disruptive* manner from the positive to the more negative parts of the objects in which the sounds and vibrations occur.]

Q.—If the sounds are produced by either of the modes already indicated, why are they not heard by all persons, in all places, without regard to the immediate proximity of some one of the comparatively few persons whose presence has hitherto seemed indispensable?

A.—All persons do not furnish a suitable medium. All will not receive the spirits. There are peculiarities in the electrical sphere, or condition, of certain persons that render it easier to produce the sounds in their presence.

Q.—Can any artificial process be devised by which the necessary condition may be induced?

A.—Yes.

Q.—Will the spirit be pleased to appoint the means, or to indicate the nature of such process?

A.—The magnetic sleep; the exercise of love; devotion to truth, and the practice of goodness.

Q.—Why have not revelations been made in a similar manner before, and in all ages past?

A.—They have.

[The Spirit here seemed to imply that spirits had always been wont to reveal their presence, and often their thoughts, by a great variety of physical effects; and that more frequent and definite communications would have been made, had any means been employed to elicit them.]

Q.—Has the childish dread or superstitious apprenensiveness of mankind been a chief obstacle in the way of this intercommunication between the spheres of the visible and invisible?

A.—It has.

Q.—What effect have the recent efforts of the human mind to investigate itself had on this intercourse?

A.—The investigations referred to have done much to prepare the minds of men for the subject, and to render the intercourse much more easy and natural.

Q.—Why then do the sounds so frequently accompany those who have never studied the laws of mind, and who have little or no interest in psychological phenomena?

A.—It is only because the peculiarities in their electrical and general condition are favorable. The young and untaught in scolastic forms are often the most *receptive* mediums—their minds not being preöccupied.

Q.—As the spirits of the invisible life become more expanded and exalted, does it become more, or less, difficult to communicate with men in the body?

A.—Less difficult. Many spirits of the higher Spheres may *directly* communicate with man.

Q.—Are there any spirits in the invisible world that would *intentionally* deceive the inhabitants of earth?

A.—There are not.

Q.—Are there any who, for want of sufficient knowledge, are liable to mislead us?

A.—Yes.

Q.—Are time and instruction required to fit the spirits, just introduced into the other world, to converse in an easy and reliable manner with those they have left behind?

A.—They are.

Q.—The spirits may be aware that the communications recently made, at different times and places, purporting to emanate from the invisible state, have not all been intrinsically harmonious: will you explain the causes of the apparent inharmony?

A.—The causes may be found in the want of harmony in the mediums, and the minds, through and on which the impressions are made.

Q.—Is it true that, in the responses given at Stratford, there have been direct and positive contradictions?

A.—There have been implied contradictions—but these will serve, in the end, to rebuke the ignorance and sectarianism of many persons, and to correct their theological views. There have been unlawful and inhuman proceedings near the spot occupied by the residence of Dr. Phelps. A murder was committed there more than fifty years since. The spirit of the murdered man often visits the place, and demonstrates his presence by physical effects. When the earthly life is cut short, by accident or other sudden and violent means, it is easier for the spirit to produce these physical demonstrations, because it left the body while in the exercise of all its powers, and before its work on earth was completed. It is for this reason that mysterious sights and sounds have always been most frequent where similar transactions have occurred. The spirit of the murderer often visits the spot where the rash act was perpetrated. The two spirits meet there; they are no longer hostile to each other. They have no disposition to injure the family of Dr. Phelps—but find in his house a convenient place for manifesting themselves, and suitable mediums of communication.

[It is well known that during the past year the residence of Rev. Dr. Phelps, in Stratford, has been the theater of some unusual exhibitions, in which an invisible power has revealed its presence, by putting numerous ponderable objects in motion—often displaying great apparent violence. These strange phenomena occur at all hours of the day as well as at night. The facts are abundantly sustained by the most reliable testimony. Mr. Phelps is a divine, of the Presbyterian order, and eminent alike for his strict orthodoxy and exemplary piety; besides, many intelligent gentlemen have visited the family mansion, and been witnesses of these marvelous exhibitions. Among others the Editor of the *Derby Journal*, and Rev. Mr. Brown, the distinguished pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Bridgeport, may be referred to as having made these phenomena the subject of a careful investigation.]

Q.—Do the same antagonisms with respect to individual char-

acter, design and action, exhibited in this sphere, also obtain in the Spirit-world?

A.—They do not.

Q.—To what source are the apparent discrepances, occasionally perceptible, to be referred?

A.—Often to the unequal development of the spirits, or the difference in the degrees of light and knowledge.

Q.—Are they, in any case, attributable to the imperfection or wickedness of those who seek and elicit the responses?

A.—They are. This is the reason why many persons receive incorrect replies.

[The Spirit distinctly indicated that, when the disposition and character of the interrogator were bad, these qualities served to derange the intervening mediums, in such a manner as to render the manifestations irregular, and the answers unreliable.]

Q.—Do these discrepances, in any case, proceed from a disposition, on the part of any spirit, to commit a deliberate and absolute wrong?

A.—They do not.

Q.—Why was it necessary to adopt the apparently rude and violent mode of address at Stratford?

A.—To arrest attention—to make them believe we are good, and wish to communicate.

Q.—But can it be shown that such destruction of property is compatible with a benevolent design?

A.—Yes; for in no other way could attention be secured. The increased happiness, to be experienced hereafter, in consequence of the modification of the views of the family, will far outweigh the slight temporal injury.

Q.—Are men left to the guardianship of spirits whose attributes and general character are similar to their own?

A.—They are.

Q.—Does God *directly*, or by express volition, make any revelation to minds in this sphere of being?

A.—He does.

Q.—Do your relations and susceptibilities admit of your receiving, constantly, such communications from the Supreme Intelligence?

A.—Yes.

Q.—Does your presence with us, and consciousness of the unhappy circumstances and conditions of human life, limit your happiness?

A.—No.

Q.—Can you come to us at all times?

A.—Not at all times; but frequently, and you sometimes remember those of us whom you have known, for the reason that, we are present to awaken the recollection.

Q.—Do the spirits of departed friends, or other congenial natures, often change the current of our thoughts; do they frequently suggest new ideas to men, and inspire them with noble resolutions?

A.—Yes; very often.

Q.—Are you more likely to be attracted to us when we think of you, or desire your presence?

A.—We are.

Q.—Have most of the revelations given to man, in past ages, been from the Divine Mind directly?

A.—No; they have mainly emanated from other spirits.

Q.—Are there wants pertaining to your present organized being which are not supplied?

A.—None.

Q.—Have you any sort of labor to perform necessary to your present outward subsistence?

A.—We have not.

Q.—What do the Spirits propose to accomplish by these new manifestations?

A.—To unite mankind, and to convince skeptical minds of the immortality of the soul.

[The alledged object of the spirits seems likely to be accomplished, in a degree at least, for the writer has already met with a number of persons who had no faith in man's immortality, till their skepticism was overwhelmed—in an hour perhaps—by these singular demonstrations.

The Spirit complained of the present organic structure and management of the Church, intimating in a most unequivocal manner that, it is too often the nursery of pride and worldly power; and that theological dogmas are cherished and defended, while the Christian virtues and graces are measurably neglected and forgotten. The Spirit affirmed distinctly that, for these reasons, the Church should be reörganized, and that the transformation will inevitably come.]

The answers, to the preceding questions, are mainly recorded in the precise language dictated or approved by the Spirit. The writer can only speak breifly concerning other interviews and experiences. While pursuing this investigation it became necessary to spend several days at Bridgeport. One morning while standing on the corner of Main and State streets—under the spreading branches of a tall elm—in conversation with several gentlemen, I suddenly received a decided *blow* on my right shoulder, which was accompanied by a peculiar sensation. I instantly looked around me, on the ground, and up into the tree, presuming that something had fallen from the higher boughs of the elm, but could not discover the least object. The circumstance furnished the occasion for some facetious remarks at the time, but soon gave place to other matters. At evening we went to converse with the spirits. In this instance the medium of communication was a young lady, and it should be observed that, Mr. Gordon was not present on the occasion.

A few moments elapsed and the sounds were heard—gradually becoming louder and more frequent—and soon there came—from the dim invisible—the announcement that Gen. ANDREW JACKSON was present, and would converse with the writer. The General here declared that he had produced the sensation experienced in the morning, which I had erroneously attributed to a material cause. Desiring some further evidence that the old Hero was really present, he proceeded to state that I *voted* for him on occasion of his last election to the Presidency, and, moreover, that I had never voted for any other President, before or since. The General was then requested to designate the place where we last met, prior to his separation from the body, whereupon he replied, 'at the Brooklyn Navy Yard'—all of which statements are strictly true. At my request the table was moved in a powerful manner, and in various directions—the motion being accompanied by a noise that might have been heard in the adjoining apartment. On removing the lamp from the room, a pale electric light gleamed over the table, and on the persons of those who were near. Throughout the whole, there was an unusual boldness and freedom in the manner of the communications, quite consonant with the spirit and character of the old Roman. The interview continued for two hours.

On another occasion, one of the spirits informed the writer that W. A. Townsend, Esq., Lady, and family, and Mr. H. C. Reynolds, would be at his residence—some twenty miles distant—on that very evening. This afforded a good opportunity to test the veracity of the spirit. Accordingly we left for home by the next train—and, on arriving at the Dépôt, actually met all the parties mentioned above.

Many curious incidents, illustrative of the spiritual presence and power, might be given, but it was the particular object, from the beginning, to explain the philosophy of the general subject, rather than to detail the facts of personal experience and observation. At this stage of the developments it would be manifestly imprudent to accept the instructions from this source, with an *unreasoning* confidence. Candor demands the acknowledgment that errors occur, and whether they have their origin in the source or the mediums of communication, it would

be alike unwise and irrational to receive these Revelations without subjecting them to a searching analysis. Let everything, therefore, be exposed to the ordeal, for neither the truth nor its advocates have anything to lose from this course, but much to gain, in the increased respect with which others will regard the subject and its friends.

It may not have escaped the observation of some that not a few persons, who claim to be interested, are inclined to *trifle* far more than is profitable to themselves, and in the opinion of others, the whole matter is degraded by being so closely identified with their folly and extravagance. A subject that has its foundation in TRUTH has little to fear from the opposition of outward enemies. A Barbarian by his rude manners could scarcely pollute the sanctuary, but a corrupt man, who bows at the shrine, may profane the most sacred places and objects by his sacriligious presence and hypocrisy. This subject, like all others, may be most abused by those who profess to regard it with favor. To command the respect of the wise and good, and to secure to ourselves the advantage of an honest and rational conviction, our investigations must be conducted in a thoughtful, earnest, and candid spirit.

The Spirits represent that a new Era is dawning on the world, in which this intercourse with mankind will become general, and those who have not yet seen the evidence of their own immortality, will have the 'witness in themselves.' In this view of the subject, these utterances—from out the Invisible—may indicate the beginning of a more spiritual life for man. So may it be. The ancient Day was glorious, but its light grew dim when the Apostles went to their rest. Since that day departed, there has been a long—long Night; and many a doubting mortal has watched his brief hour, and thought that night would never end. And when the hour—the sad, short hour—of earthly being had past, with no ray but the faint glimmering of the silent stars, the watcher went to his repose; and another—lonely and desolate—sat in his place. Thus wore the night away, till spirits came to herald the dawn! And now—rays of the Orient flash up from the unrisen Orb, and fall in a golden mist, gilding the surface of the gloom profound!